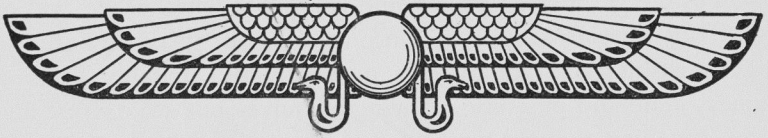


"Point out the 'Way'—However dimly, and lost among the host—as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness."



MERCURY.

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RETROSPECTIVE.

THE old year is vanishing, and before greeting the new one, let us pause and give one last parting glance to the old. Some of us will bless him for the good he has brought us, some will perhaps curse him for the disappointments and bitter lessons he has carried with him. But nevertheless, as part of *Time*, he has never abandoned us, never left us except in dreamless sleep, when we, perhaps have soared beyond time into limitless space. Who knows? Sleep hides many mysteries, and dreams are not mere visions. They often present to us a mirror of what might have been in our waking hours, or what may happen to us in the future, but, unless we apply their lessons during the day, they will not affect us materially.

If life were a mere dream, old Father Time would not trouble us much; we could live on undisturbed in a subjective world of our own creation, formed by our thoughts, but it is the stern realities of life, the active, pulsating energies of human existence which draw us out from our shell. It is this which makes of Time a momentous, terrible reality, and which to some causes a day to appear like a year, a year like a span of life, and a span of life as all eternity.

Time leads us onwards; it admits of no stopping place; the wheel of life is forever turning, and we follow, whether we will or not. But whereto are we moving, what is our goal, why are we eagerly rushing on, day by day, nervously and irritably, seeking money, fame and pleasure, allowing ourselves but scanty rest and little time for thought? Those are questions that everyone might well ask himself at the end of the year.

As the sun the last time dips down in the clouds and the darkness sets in, heralding the morn of the new year, would it not be well to cast one backward glance at the old year and say to ourselves: What has he brought us; is it knowledge, is it wisdom, is it joy, is it folly, or is it mere emptiness? Have we become neither better nor worse? What have the Norns been weaving for us during the year in their web of cause and effect? is it a clear thread, fine and strong as silk, is it a coarse woollen texture, or is the spool all entangled? Are we full of hope or disenchanted and world weary? do we hold our heads high or does our conscience and care weigh down our hearts and bend our necks?

To many these thoughts will never occur; to them the old year will glide into the new one without their noticing the difference. They will be so absorbed in the turmoils of the world, that they will never give themselves time to reflect.

Doré, the great French artist, who in his drawings combines a marvellous skill with a display of the weird, fantastic and grotesque that affects a sensitive mind like a peal of an organ, has admirably depicted one of Dante's word-imageries—that of the whirling round of the condemned souls, ever struggling, pressing onwards, trampling each other without mercy, on that journey, which is without hope, without light. In this darkness, a lurid flash of lightning sometimes appears, exposing to light the ugliness, the cruelty and misery, the utter nakedness of that whirling crowd and may cause many a one to stop and stare round in bewilderment. But the flash only lasts a second and is soon forgotten. On they rush again, some willingly, others unwittingly, dragged on to this mad carnival. A few hold themselves aloof, afraid of being whirled to their doom, but only to seek a dance of their own in quiet seclusion.

But how few ever stop to pause, to look back to see what kind of

path they have been treading! And how few ever look upwards to seek for that light which shines steadily with a bright glow, which is ever there, surrounding us, but which we cannot see for our blindness. That light might help us out of the whirl to find the path, from which we could draw other struggling souls towards us. Now, as the year is drawing to a close, we might ask: where is this light, have we seen it during the year, and what has it done for us? May we pause, breathe and ponder.

In olden times, whole communities used to draw together certain days for intro- and retrospection; such a day was called *Thanksgiving*, a day which originally was not meant to be devoted to feasting and carousing. Such a day is also *Christmas*, a day which recalls to us a time when the lights of heaven grew brighter than usual, and a star of the first magnitude, the star of Bethlehem, appeared. That light still shines with undiminished force, piercing and illuminating many a soul, who looks for its rays. Many such lights have appeared to the world, many stars are shining, large and small; we have only to search and we will see them.

As we sit quietly in the midnight hour, gazing through our window, the old year noiselessly glides away; he does not any longer seem to us the grim old man; he smiles, waves his hand and we strain our eyes to see where he can have vanished. The stars are still twinkling; the new year is indistinct. We do not know what he will bring us, and we eagerly look for a star that can help us, each one seeking that which best suits his needs and aspirations. But everyone is not merely a seeker; every human being can also become a helper, a center of light, diffusing love and comfort to those who need it. Therefore no effort is to be despised; no star, however small, passed by with indifference.

There is a star, a tiny one, which just now seeks the attention of the world. It is called MERCURY; it is also a winged messenger, ready to fly and alight whenever called, a messenger ever ready and eager to help, but whose wings are yet small, unabling it to soar afar. But in measure as helping thoughts and hands will come forward to assist it in its onward course, so will its wings grow, and its light shine ever brighter, and it will seek to penetrate to high and low, bringing with it its message of peace, goodwill and enlightenment into many a hearth and home. A. W.

THE MAHAYANA OF GAUTAMA.

JAPAN claims, boldly, to be the depository of pure Buddhism, which is the Mahayana, leading to the Maha Meru, or the pinnacle of philosophy. To sustain her claim, she outlines by clear-cut logic her interpretation of the teaching of Bhagavat, and dares to parallel it with modern science, as well as with the profoundest thinking of man;—not only this, but she defies experimental investigation, and bids the whole world put the doctrine to test by actual practice. The challenge is certainly fair and above-board; it unveils truth and presents her naked; it strips aside the glamour of mysticism and defies the glare of the sun, presuming that the blind are safe by their very blindness, and that those who have eyes, see with more clearness in a strong light.

The interpretation of the "Three Baskets" of Sakyamuni made by all sects of Buddhism in Japan is no contradiction to the synthetic philosophy of Herbert Spencer, and in its broad sweep of inductions and deductions from the Unknowable to the Knowable, and backward again from the Knowable to the Unknowable, there is truly no difference. All deep students of the philosophy of Gautama know that its foundation rests firmly upon experience and inference, and that the Nirvana is nothing but that adjustment of the soul to the body, of the mind to matter, which shall tend toward the equilibrium or balance of the two. The surface thinker will raise his eyes to heaven in amazement, and pronounce the word "Materialism," almost in a whisper, as if afraid the blasphemy might be heard; but he who goes deeper will see the word "Spiritualism," written in letters of fire, and will find Bigotry and Dogma fleeing from him, terrified by the flames. Mystery is the natural veil which falls over the eyes of Ignorance, and is never lifted except by the hands of Logic and Fact.

Though Bhagavat taught in three ways, which simplified, meant but two, the soul of his teaching was the Unit or One. The paradox of Buddhism lies in the fact that the two methods, namely, the esoteric and the exoteric, seemed to be at war with each other and a contradiction; for while he taught the masses to kill desire,

to the Initiate he preached *life* or the meaning and use of desire. The whole aim and object of his philosophy was to come into the consciousness of self, and to those yet unenlightened, he taught self-abnegation, or the extreme of unconscionsness, in order that by rebound, they might strike full consciousness or true life; the seeming paradox, means but the law of action and reaction which are always equal—an axiom of philosophy. To play with the fire of Nirvana, half conscious, is to be the child and the flame—but he who steals up to warmth from an extreme of cold, can bear, by his previous preparation, the torrid splendors of Sirius.

It would seem that the great Teachers, Jesus, Gautama, and Laotsze availed themselves of parable and paradox as naturally as they breathed, and this not from love of mystery, but from necessity. The two hundred and fifty moral precepts of the Hinayana taught in the Agama Sutra, mean but the *one* principle of Mahayana, taught in the Saddhama-Pundarika Sutra.

The Hinayana would seem to be the practicing of precepts or rules until by experience, a revelation of the law which evolved these mandates becomes clear—an inductive method to climb to a principle on the ladder of experience—the Mahayana, on the contrary, reverses the whole process, and descends the ladder from Law to living—the one is the ascending of man to heaven, the other is the descent of the gods to earth.

Of course the subtle thinker knows very well that in considering the laws of Nature—by this I mean the universal principles—he is forced by the very necessity of the case, to postulate a law of the laws, and this by the Mahayana Buddhist is called the Ekayana. He who has become enlightened, in other words balanced towards the deductive rather than the inductive in his thinking, enters the world of experience with the tablet of *the Law* in his hand; he is the Moses descending from Mount Sinai, with the ten moral precepts reduced to One; his face is aglow with the white light of concentration, and invincible in the simplicity of his strength, he leads the Children of Israel to the Promised Land.

He who approximates toward the balance between induction and deduction, holds the magic wand of Nirvana—it is, as it were, the measuring rod of the square by which he builds the temple

of his own being. The principle of the Nirvana is that power of judgment by which he discriminates between the laws, and arrives, by his own clear seeing, as near to the equilibrium as he may desire. By abandoning the laws and substituting the *Law of Them*, he plunges open-eyed into his experiences, rather than blindfold, and the difference between himself and another, lies in his measure of self-consciousness. Science leads one back, step by step, from the complex to the simple; from the special it travels slowly but surely to the Unit or One. Like Buddhism, Science can find no beginning on which to plant its first premise; like Buddhism, Science can find no ending on which to drive home its final conclusion. The spiral grows as naturally from Herbert Spencer's biology as it did from the subtleties of Buddhist philosophy, and though all along the line of the varying circle there seem to be points which might be called beginnings, in reality they are but ebb tides, which follow the flow of the ocean of change. The rhythm of the philosophy of the English master of synthesis, and the rhythm of Confucius in the "Book of Changes," famous in the literature of China, are as identical in spirit as children twin-born, and preach more loudly than words the truth of Immortality, which takes a backward perspective as well as a forward glance. Creation, then, is not taught by Gautama, unless by creation is meant that infinite variety which repeated combinations of the same things invariably provoke. The law of periodicity is the inevitable result of action and reaction, and is as much a tenet of science as an axiom of Buddhism,

Southern Buddhism has less to do with the Mahayana than the northern, which is especially taught in Japan. Southern Buddhism roams more in the maze of secondary causes, and shades off the glare of the central sun with an umbrella of moral precepts, theories and hypotheses; northern Buddhism goes bare-headed along the Mahayana, finding its way by the measure of Nirvana. Southern Buddhism is complex, while the northern is simple—the one includes the other, as a greater includes the less; the Unit enfolds the Variety, as the whole enwraps its parts.

Five hundred million human beings sit at the feet of Bhagavat Sakyamuni to-day, and either from one extreme or the other, run

the gamut of Buddhism, which is the scale of science and the rhythmic chord of philosophy. In Siam, Anam, Burmah, Ceylon, Chittagon, Aracan, the Hinayana is the beaten path over which Southern Buddhists travel from birth to death, while the broad way or Mahayana is well worn by millions whose homes are in Japan, China, Corea, Manchuria, and Thibet; nevertheless the Buddhism of the last two named places greatly differs in its origin from the Mahayana of Japan; it is really Lamaism, and is only included with the northern Buddhism because it veers nearer to that than to the southern. Japan has handed down Hinayana together with Mahayana, but the former is simply studied as an appendix of the latter; most of the numerous sects inculcate Mahayana, and vary but very little in the essence of their idea.

Old Solomon said that there is nothing new under the sun, and Science, after the throes of labor and the agonies of birth, finds herself blinking by the side of Bhagavat, twins of a mother, who brought them forth neath the boughs of the Bo tree at Benares, the one to dream through the centuries asleep in potentiality, the other to walk up and down the earth alive with activity.

Who is prophet enough to foretell the result now that they have clasped hands and gazed into each other's eyes, fully and terribly awake?

ANNIE ELIZABETH CHENEY.

THEOSOPHY AND SCIENCE.

NUMEROUS definitions have been suggested for Theosophy. Some view it as a new religion, others call it a new philosophy or a new science, and not a few consider it merely as a new fad. In the estimation of students having any tolerable acquaintance with its depth and capabilities, none of these definitions are correct, and the most satisfactorily adequate and comprehensive one yet offered, is that one due, I think, to the late W. Q. Judge, who termed it at once "a Religious Science and a Scientific Religion." In my estimation, however, it is yet more than this, since there is nothing, no knowledge, that is not embraced by it; it would therefore seem more precise to term it the Key to Universal Knowledge or Wisdom possessed by Divine Beings.

Theosophy has essentially two aspects, the devotional and the scientific, each of which may appeal more especially to certain minds. In its devotional aspect, it is found by honest enquirers to be more satisfactory than, and certainly complementary to and explanatory of all ordinary religious tenets, since every known religion is built on a Theosophical substratum. But in its scientific aspect, it is still more important, because, while science is the key to all earthly progress, Theosophy can be justly called the beacon of science; in fact, it is the science of sciences, because it alone satisfactorily explains many problems that no branch of science ever could fully explain, and it throws perfect light on questions that the most advanced science cannot yet illumine.

This being conceded, it remains all the more a matter of surprise to many students, that Theosophy and modern science should still be estranged, even in some minds, antagonistic one to the other, while in truth they ought to lean on each other. The chief cause of the clash seems to be that Theosophy starts essentially from spirit, or makes of spirit the base of all things, while modern science,—the descendant from materialistic skepticism,—still starts from matter, studies matter, and too often admits of matter alone, totally ignoring or even denying spirit. Nevertheless, science has undeniably done wonders for humanity, especially in this century. As Mr. Berthelot, one of the most eminent chemists of the age, expressed it in his presidential address at the International Congress of Applied Chemistry in Paris, there is nothing so astounding as the difference between the modern era of applied science during the last three-quarters of a century, and the whole development of the race during the last 6000 years, "a difference so marked that a new man was being created in a new earth, and the entire social organization was being transformed amid conditions for the comprehension of which the past offered no suggestive precedents or data." The great chemist again and again reverted to this idea—in which he was most convincing—"that the continuous intervention of science in human life was an unprecedented fact in human history;" and certainly, so far as our present knowledge goes, the eminent scientist was right, although it would be rather difficult for a Theosophist to admit, without demurring, that the

present perfection of science is absolutely unprecedented, and that there have never been any previous epochs or cycles in the history of humanity,—for example, during the glorious culmination of the Fourth Race,—when science may have been materially quite as advanced as now, if not even more so. But the records of the facts are yet lost to the remembrance of history outside of Theosophical traditions.

There is no denying, on the other hand, that however great its accomplishments, science in its present stage has been exclusively directed to benefit material man, to pander to all his material wants and desires, and that it has done nothing to improve human spirituality; quite the reverse. Many of the scientific tendencies of past years have been to make man forget that he has a soul, to make him believe that he was matter only, and had only material necessities, the satisfaction of which was the *summum bonum* of a life ending in the material grave.

This materialistic position of science was especially well and sharply defined at the time when Theosophy was first introduced to the present generations; and it is even admitted that the new dispensation of Theosophical tenets was granted purposely to counteract and destroy the nefarious effects of the predominant materialistic ideas. Thus, in her *Secret Doctrine*, as well as in *Lucifer*, H. P. B. had to score pretty severely many erroneous scientific theories, which have since become gradually corrected by the constant studies and discoveries of younger scientists. But since H. P. B.'s time, the whole position of science has been rapidly changing; and it is a fact very apparent to any one who cares to notice it, that the old skeptical theories are being gradually modified so radically, that, often unconsciously to the scientists themselves, science is daily coming into the domain of Theosophy, corroborating Theosophical theories, verifying Theosophical announcements and assertions. This change is becoming more and more apparent as the century flies away, and it must be a surprise to the uninitiated public, to find how many scientists of note have become openly avowed Theosophists, how many even have joined the Theosophical Society. Thus, to mention only a few known names, the English Professor Crookes, the highest of modern chemists; the French Flammarion; the world-known

astronomer; Edison, the pride of America, are all F. T. S. Another noted American, Keeley, may, although I believe he never joined the Society, be taken as a Theosophist, on account of an apparently correct prediction of H. P. B., saying that he would never be *allowed* to turn his wonderful discovery to any practical use, as it is premature and would, in this age of wickedness, be the cause of more harm than good. (*S. D.* Old Edition, I, 563.)

This gradual evolution of science towards Theosophy, corroboration of which can be found in every number of scientific publications, cannot fail to be of great benefit to humanity, while it must be of mutual advantage to scientists and Theosophists alike.

Now, taking into consideration that many persons can be reached, appealed to and convinced through science only, I consider it is the duty of every Theosophist to make it his business to call attention to this gradual reconciliation and fusion between science and Theosophy. While Theosophists ought to pay more attention than many do, to scientific efforts, they ought also to induce scientific men to become more familiar with the tenets and theories of Theosophy. More especially in relation to Branches of the T. S., they ought to make it a standing part of their work, to watch all scientific discoveries, and to show out, in a popular form, how closely these are related to Theosophy; in other words, they ought to bring out all the scientific corroborations that can be found for Theosophical teachings, as well as to demonstrate the Theosophical corroborations of scientific findings, while also pointing out to the Theosophical corrections that are to be made to old scientific errors. Thus, in a short time, by such united efforts, wherever the Theosophical Societies exist, it would be proven to the world that Theosophy is at the root of true science, just as much as it is of religion, and that humanity will be more radically and usefully helped than ever before when Science, Religion and Theosophy go hand in hand.

The necessity for this kind of work, I am glad to state, has already been fully recognized, and to the credit of the youngest, but most active outshoot of the English stock, in New Zealand and New South Wales, a plan has been formulated to carry it out. At the suggestion of an eminent scientist, Mr. Hunt, F. T. S., an Association has been formed in Sydney especially for the

diffusion of scientific Theosophy,—or of Theosophical science, this embracing the laudable object of getting scientific men interested in Theosophical doctrines. As our friends at the Antipodes are well known for their push, their go-ahead and activity, it cannot be doubtful, not only that this useful suggestion will be carried out successfully, but that interesting results will soon prove it to have been both wise and timely.

Why cannot a similar association be started in California, where men of distinguished scientific attainments are so numerous? And who will come to the front to start it?

A. MARQUES.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF UNITY AND THE UNITY OF PHILOSOPHY.

AT home and abroad "The philosophy of unity" presents its claims to the "Seeker after Truth." The voice is not strange or new, but the language is to some extent, whereby it has acquired new force and more insistence. The universe is one, not was or will become. Above a world against itself divided I see an angel form, compounded of the many radiant minds of whose anxious guests and patient vigils, the revelation that all is one was the reward. Standing above those who grope in darkness, praying for the light, I hear him speak and tenderly reply, "Thy light has come." To the sad heart who views the world as a pageant passing by, leaving him or her deserted and alone, his words come like the perfume-laden breeze, kissing the aching brow and pallid cheek: "Thou art not alone, the universe is one, thou one with it. What thou holdest to be sternly real but seems the spectral forms of the shadow land of dreams, waking, thou shalt know it true." Because the sage knows that waking will surely follow our dreaming, the calm of his brow is undisturbed. It is not like the calmness of indifference or insensibility, but of one who knows that in it all lies valuable experience, which will serve in the aftertime as rounds in the ladder of our ascent. Then looking backwards upon the old, sad days, his calmness will be ours; where all seemed dark and gloomy, brightness will appear; for then the clouds, instead of being between us and the

sun, will be behind us, and his golden rays shine full upon them. So will our hearts partake of their brightness, even as they partake of the sun's brightness; and the concurrence of our mood with the scene around us, will help to disclose how intimately nature and we, and all things are connected—the oneness, the unity of all. The message of unity comes to me with a peculiar force and meaning. I am borne, as it were, upon the housetop. All nature is spread around. All the differences and peculiarities that appear, blend fitly into one grand harmony of form and color. I pass and repass in contemplation, from the smallest distinguishable unit to the great, collective whole, and back again. What is true of one is true of the other. The great is compounded of the less; the less is the great of the lesser still. From the one world-mother springs the manifest variety of terrestrial things. There lies their secret of unity—unity not among themselves, but in their common cause, in the place of their beginning. Glancing at the tree tops, men and mountains, their unity is not apparent; but follow them back to the common soil, trace their wide diverging lines back till they merge in unity. To me the grandeur and glory of the revelation lies, not so much in the possibilities and promise of the future, the greater marvel is the unsuspected, or unrealized unity, not merely promised, but existing and fulfilled in the present. We may look forward to unity with the Divine, but better than that hope or prospect, is the consciousness within one's self that never was there any real separation between the Divine and self. Such know when they see a tender, fragrant flower and the soil, that both are one. The point of view, the aspect and conditions change; the thing itself is one ever and the same. Names mark changes of conditions; back of all is One, changeless, unconditioned—unlimited! Blessed is he who has seen these things.

For him that hath strict vigil kept
Throughout the weary night watch, worn,
The sunrise on the eastern hills
Heralds forth a glorious morn.

That unity which we all so love, or at least admire, which coming as it does from the vastness and variety of manifest Nature,

is, as it were, focused into a radiant point, a unit idea, telling us that all things merge into one thing, radiates and unfolds until we see that one thing, that unity, expand into the universe. Possibly in no department of human inquiry are appearances more against a common, fundamental unity than they are in the many religious systems. The case presents serious difficulties, as do all such, whether they have to deal with religion, science, or other matters; for an opinion, held previous to investigation, tends to bias the judgment and prejudice the case, when it is under review. This it generally does unconsciously to ourselves, which makes it all the more harmful. A just estimate of and deduction from a case can only be had, when the trend of the facts is not affected by one's personal bias, interest or inclination. With the foregoing in view, it is always my endeavor to suppress my personality when seeking after truth. I strive less to maintain a theory than to discover a fact.

In other words, I endeavor to let facts dominate the theory, not theory the facts. It is after thus holding myself in check, that the revelation of the unity of philosophy comes to me as a fact. I do not find it in the disputations of the Doctors (D. D.) in ritualism, nor in applied faith—yet I find it!

Religions have grown like stately piles, their bare, substantial walls blossomed with ornamentation; and over all has crept the ivy green of alien encroachments. It is the ivy that we see, or else the ornamentation. Scarce do we gaze on, wonder at, admire that firm-set base and inner structure, to whose towering sides they cling, dependent and obtrusive. The religion common to our people says, "God is everywhere"—in all things. The East says in substance, that from the Divine Nature all things issued forth, and will return to It. If it be true that two things cannot occupy the same space at the same time, it will be seen that both propositions declare the whole universe to be Divine. Right here it may be well to suggest that an error has crept into our minds in reference to the essential meaning of the term "Divine" and "material." We regard them as essentially distinct and separate. How much of mystery and hopeless difficulty we would escape, were we to understand them to be terms denoting different *aspects, states, or conditions of the One Being.*

Being is not to be understood here in the limited sense of embodied form. How many of us, accustomed to using the words "Jesus" and "Christ" interchangeably, have stood in a state of hopeless bewilderment, when trying to fathom the mystery of how it is possible for Jesus Christ to be in each one of the millions of earth's people. Churchmen console us with the assurance that it is incomprehensible by man, a part of wisdom reserved by God to Himself. "The light shineth in a dark place," worthy fraters, and by its rays we perceive that "Jesus" designates a man, "Christ" a principle. Though the particles of His body may not suffice for so wide a distribution, the principle, so grandly manifested in His person, being of universal extension, can permeate all of us. When manifesting in a personality it is personal. The deification from Jesus comes from sensing the Divinity of the Christ. The Christ is one of the faces of the Divine Triad; and this Trinity finds practically, universal recognition in the philosophies, constituting another thread which binds them together into a unity. Further, recognizing this, it will not matter to us whether one calls this "Third Person" "Jesus Christ", "Mitra" or another name. Our attention and worship will be directed not to the name but, to that which is named; which being one in all and every nation, will manifest itself, where actively present, as sympathy encompassing the unison of individuals, no matter how diverse their outward forms and creeds may appear. Thus, through the observance of correspondences, and by setting aside aftergrowths and mere localisms, as differences fade away, fundamental unity begins to appear.

For ages we have been building up barriers, cemented with prejudice, pride and petty ambitions, monuments of human frailty.

Who, tired of forging fetters of steel that bind their own oppressed and chafing spirit, wills to be free?

Not alone by the heart's desire are the "barriers burned away." Labor and wait. Build not to keep another out; but build to shut the whole world in. The Sun is risen, day is at hand. Let us labor then faithfully and with patience. It is ours to do, and for fruition wait with the firm assurance that it will not be denied. Must we enjoy the fruit; or do we sow that the world may reap?

The world is waking; and

To them who slept while the stars grew bright,

And the shadows lay thick in the vale,

With a kiss comes the dawn crying, 'wake, and arise;

And the watchers turn eastward, cry Hail!

CHAS. H. CONNER.

THE FORUM DEPARTMENT.

Any person can send questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon Theosophical subjects. When necessary, the various communications will be condensed by the editor. Be careful to write only on one side of the paper.

QUESTION CCCLII.

What is the difference, if any, between a mystic and an occultist? Jacob Boehme was a great mystic; was he also an occultist?

M. A. W.—The mystic and the occultist may be said to represent, one the negative, the other the positive aspect of that consciousness which brings the soul in touch with God and God's thoughts; for the mystic perceives and feels the light from which life proceeds, and becomes illumined with its radiance; while the occultist studies the potencies of that hidden light and uses them, projects them either to create or destroy. Mysticism also implies a losing of self in the all, hence the devotional love element is a characteristic of the mystic, and selflessness grows with this love.

However much a mystic may be in error when he tries to interpret that which he feels and sees on the higher planes of consciousness—for the prejudices and ignorance of his mental environment act as mist and fog, obscuring and distorting his soul's perception—yet he is never selfish; love keeps him pure.

On the other hand, occultism is an intensification of the self through the development of all the potencies of the self, hence knowledge and power are pre-eminent in the occultist. Herein, lies the great danger of black magic; and it is a sad fact that there is evil as well as good in occultism. The occultist is more active, as we understand activity; he proceeds scientifically to analyze processes of nature hitherto unknown; he trains his mental

faculties; focusses his forces for the purpose of controlling the entities of the kingdoms beneath him; he is an experimental scientist on the hidden planes of being. The mystic, in a sense, is more passive, content to feel himself at one with the divine and prefers contemplation to experiment. The true adept (a Master) is both mystic and occultist, having love and knowledge equally developed, and his power is the power born of selflessness. Only such a one, we are told, can reach the higher planes.

Jacob Boehme was not an occultist in the sense of an experimenter.

A. W.—The difference between a mystic and an occultist lies in the method of development. The former is a result of a growth on devotional lines; the latter is an enfoldment of psychical and intellectual faculties. The mystic turns away from the world, which to him appears as a shadowy mirage, to the one reality, union with God, and his ultimate aim is to merge his being into that of the divinity, his conception of God, therefore, being a pantheistic one. In India this union is brought about by Yoga, perfect calmness of mind; in the West by ecstasy, intense religious fervour, the mystic is led on by his heart and feelings. In both cases it is a passive state; the mystic might be called a medium of divine love, and purity of heart is his chief aim and object. The occultist proceeds with his development in quite a different manner. He studies the laws of nature, tries to penetrate into their innermost secrets. As he knows that all the forces of nature are reflected in his own self, he endeavors to make his whole being harmonize with the surrounding nature; he seeks the keynote of his particular individuality, and, having found that, he concentrates his mind and lets it bear on matter, moulding it to suit his own convenience. He is intensely active, and is able more directly to help and influence his fellow men than the mystic, who acts more by example and precept. Jacob Boehme was not merely a mystic; as a disciple of the school of Paracelsus he sought an intellectual explanation of the relation of the macrocosmos to the microcosmos, but he never applied it in practice, therefore he could not be called an occultist. A Theosophist seems to me to be the term which best characterizes the mighty introspective intellect of Jacob Boehme.

QUESTION CCCLIII.

What is Renunciation as understood by Theosophy?

MRS. M. MAXWELL.—It is the renunciation of self with its appetites, selfish desires, affections and ambitions; it is ignoring the demands of self in administering to the necessities of others; it is looking stern duty in the face and acting up to the dictates of conscience, independent of the prevailing usages of society.

Renunciation is really an overcoming and a fulfilling, it is overcoming sense, gratifications and fulfilling the law of love which smoothly and harmoniously flows, when the obstacle that held it back has been removed, and it is expressed in service to others. Renunciation is the finger post that points out the road to the would-be disciple of Occultism, from the very first step taken on the path by the disciple to the last by the Master at the gates of Nirvana. The renunciation of Nirvanic bliss, that reward for all great souls who have toiled unselfishly up life's rugged path, is called the greatest renunciation of all, but is it really so? How can he, whose heart is filled with love and sympathy "warm as sunshine's glow," born of experience, enjoy that bliss, while he knows there are teeming millions of his fellow beings needing his help? No! So the reward due for ages of faithful work is given up and service to humanity takes its place; *this* is true Renunciation.

J. S.—"Self-preservation is the first law of man—self-sacrifice is the first law of God." We may know that we are entering upon the spiritual life when we begin to think more of our duty to others and less of ourselves. This change becomes more and more pronounced as we advance through all the different stages of growth until we are led up to the great renunciation.

Theosophy requires us to be unselfish in the everyday things of commonplace domestic and business life. We often show as much heroism in meeting these daily worries and petty annoyances bravely, in holding ourselves calmly above the tumult of passion and ambition, as in the doing of the things which the world calls great. Theosophy calls for nothing less than the daily, hourly sacrifice of self for the sake of others. By this self-discipline we build up our characters, so that when the great trials come we are able to meet them with calmness and fortitude.

NOTICE.

QUESTIONS TO BE DEALT WITH IN THE NEXT AND SUBSEQUENT
ISSUES OF THE FORUM.

1. *If the so-called "spirits" which appear at spiritualistic seances are really astral bodies controlled for the time by elementaries, how is it that their manifestations of answers to questions sometimes display intelligence and a knowledge of circumstances, etc., sufficient, apparently, to identify the visitant with a departed spirit?*
2. *What is the Theosophical conception of prayer.*

Answers should be sent in as soon as possible.

T. S. ECHOES.

SPOKANE, WASHINGTON, NOVEMBER 20th.—Spokane has enjoyed a rare intellectual treat during the last two weeks listening to the Theosophical lectures of the Countess Wachtmeister. She began her work by lecturing to a large audience in the Unitarian Church on ‘Death and After,’ and then gave a series of discourses in the Auditorium Hall. The Eclectic Society was also honored by her presence as well as the Spokane Sorosis Literary Club, and she spoke to both societies with that rare facility of expression which characterizes all her utterances. On the latter occasion, she was persuaded to depart from her usual Theosophical line of thought and to tell something of the attainments of the Crowned Heads of Europe both in art and literature. The Countess was able during her visit here to arouse a great deal of interest in the Theosophical cause, and the result has been the forming of a new lodge styled the ‘Olympus Lodge’ of the American Section T. S., Spokane, Washington. The new lodge is fortunate in having as its President Professor John Mackenzie, a noted professor of sciences, President of the Spokane Academy of Science. Like many other scientists, he recognizes that pure materialistic science is not sufficient to account for all the phenomena in nature, and therefore is turning to Theosophy for a solution of some of its problems. Mrs. G. S. Hamilton of the Sorosis Club, has kindly consented to be the Secretary, and Mrs. L. E. Brown, Treasurer and Librarian, so the future of the Olympus Lodge looks bright and encouraging, and any of the members of the T. S. who would like to correspond, send papers, etc., to this new lodge, are cordially invited to do so. Address Mrs. G. S. Hamilton, P. O. Box 1077, Spokane, Wash. Mrs. Louise Horn-Thomas, counselor to the American Section, has also been at Spokane, and it is partly owing to her

devotion and assistance that the work of the Countess in this city was such a great success. The Countess has now left us on her eastward journey, taking with her the warm blessings of many a grateful heart.

SPOKANE, WASHINGTON, NOVEMBER 30th.—The Olympus Lodge has held three meetings since its formation, two private, devoted to organizing and outlining the work, and one public on Sunday evening, the 29th, at Mozart Hall, when a lecture was given by President J. Mackenzie. We have had several books presented to us by the Countess Wachtmeister, to which Mrs. Horn-Thomas has added several others, and we hope soon to have quite a library, owned by the lodge. The Olympus Lodge has sixteen chartered members, all earnest students, and they hope soon to increase in numbers as well as in the knowledge of Theosophy.

G. S. HAMILTON, *Secretary*.

CHICAGO, DECEMBER 7th.—I will commence my new duties as Secretary of the Branch by telling you of our annual election, Wednesday, December 6th.

Mr. G. Marpole Willis was again elected President; Mrs. Edith Sears Vice-President; Miss Isabel M. Stevens, Secretary and Treasurer; Mr. E. P. Bodelson, Librarian.

There has been a good deal of activity in the Chicago Branch lately, and the last few months we have had the advantage of having with us three "wise men from the East," the well-known Buddhist bhikshu, Angariku H. Dharmapala, Virchand Ghandi, B. A., and Saalan, who are instructing us in Hindu philosophy, etc., and have been lecturing for us different Sunday evenings on lines practically identical with Theosophical teachings.

ISABEL M. STEVENS, *Secretary*.

TORONTO, CANADA, NOVEMBER 19th.—The Toronto Theosophical Society began public meetings for this season on September 20th, and have continued same every Sunday evening since. Their hall is centrally located at the corner of College street and Spadina avenue. Speakers and subjects been as follows:

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| September | 20th, | (Mr. Fullerton's paper,) Theosophy in Practice. |
| " | 27th, | W. T. James, The Science of Ethics. |
| October | 4th, | F. E. Titus, The Theosophical Society. |
| " | 11th, | W. J. Watson, The Exclusion of the Chinese. |
| " | 18th, | W. H. Gardiner. The Atonement. |
| " | 25th, | A. G. Horwood, Symbolism in Religion. |
| November | 1st, | F. E. Titus, The Christian Mysteries. |
| " | 8th, | A. G. Horwood, Spiritualism and Clairvoyance. |
| " | 15th, | F. E. Titus, The First Hour after Death. |

There has been an encouraging increase in the attendance; at the end of the first month the number had nearly doubled; that number was more than doubled in the second month. On the evening of October 1st, the members and their friends were invited to an "At Home", this being the method adopted to formally open our new hall. An interesting programme of music and short addresses was provided, and thoroughly appreciated by the audience, which numbered over fifty.

The copies of *MERCURY* we receive each month, when not sold shortly after arrival, are placed in book stores upon sale or return. The publicity thus obtained for our literature helps the cause.

In the November number of the *Metaphysical Magazine* may be found an article on "The Transmission of Qualities," written by Mr. W. T. James, one of our members.

F. E. TITUS.

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, DECEMBER 3d.—I am pleased to state that our lodge is making real and substantial progress and the amount of interest shown in the meetings is greatly in excess of my own expectations and is certainly very encouraging. The members are working harmoniously and pleasantly, and the excellent nucleus of a library, which we owe to the generosity of the Countess Wachtmeister, proves to be of great value and assistance.

I should add that, as a result of correspondence with Mrs. Cooper-Oakley, we have received from that lady the necessary printed papers for conducting a Secret Doctrine class, and there is every prospect that this course of study will be pursued with increased enthusiasm and profit

T. A. B.

SAN FRANCISCO, NOVEMBER 30, 1896.—On November 4th, the Golden Gate Branch held its monthly social evening. There was a good attendance, many visitors, and much pleasant and agreeable interchange of thought. The lodge meetings of the month have been taken up with the study of Creation, the Fall according to Genesis, and things generally relating to early manifestation, and much interest has been evinced in the subjects under discussion. Two new members have been admitted.

The training class Friday evening continues its work to the great benefit of those in attendance. The subjects under discussion have been principally nations, such as the Egyptian, old Mexican, and Persian.

The Sunday evening lectures in Portola Hall have been well attended. The lecturers and subjects were as follows: Mr. Charles P. Neilsen, "Intuition"; Mr. W. J. Walters, "Alchemy and Alchemists"; Mrs. Alice Best, "Creation—a Study of Genesis"; Prof. A. Marques, "Scien-

tific Corroboration of Theosophy"; Miss M. A. Walsh, "Woman's Place in Nature."

J. C. BRODIE.

LOS ANGELES, DECEMBER 17, 1896.—Since my last report to MERCURY Harmony Lodge T. S. has had the pleasure and benefit of a two weeks' visit from Count Wachtmeister, who was during his stay in Los Angeles the guest of Mr. and Mrs. E. P. Halseth. The Count gave two very interesting and instructive public lectures, one on Meditation and the Power of Thought, the other on Buddhism, both of which were well attended. Following out his suggestion it has seemed best to amalgamate the regular Public Branch meeting with the Training Class so that Monday evening might be left free for a Study class for the members, or for any others, sufficiently in earnest to be willing to apply themselves to careful and continuous work. The Headquarters of the Lodge have been removed to 220 1-2 S. Main St. where a large and more commodious hall has been rented, the room formerly occupied proving too small and inconvenient for public lectures. This change of Headquarters promises to be of great benefit to the Branch. The lecture last Sunday evening, "An Outline of Theosophy," was well attended and much interest was manifested. The Count's visit has been productive of much good and we hope to have him with us again some time in the future.

H. RANDOLPH, Sec'y.

BUTTE, MONTANA, December 1.—The Countess Wachtmeister arrived in Butte a few days ago, having just escaped being caught in a terrible blizzard; the train on which she came had been blocked by drift of fifty feet of snow. The cold weather continues, but the Countess seems to stand it very well and is lecturing with her usual ability and success, arousing a great amount of interest in Theosophy, not the least among the mining population. Last night a Theosophical Lodge was formed, the first in this city, called the Butte Lodge, with eighteen chartered members, and several others have expressed their intention of joining. The following officers were elected: President, Mrs. Rowena Nichols; Secretary, Mr. A. B. Edler; Treasurer, Mr. David W. Trotter, and Librarian, Mrs. Louise Horn-Thomas.

SHERIDAN, WYOMING.—The course of lectures, given by the Countess Wachtmeister, was attended by audiences which taxed the capacity of the hall in which they were delivered. Every one listened with the greatest attention, and it is acknowledged by every one that no equal to the Countess has ever been heard in Sheridan. The first lecture was given on Thursday, December 10th, on "Death and After."

The deep interest created by this lecture, manifested itself in the questions, which were asked, some practical, some abstruse, from devout Christians and outspoken materialists ; all showed the interest and intense feeling stirred into life by the lecture. And all were answered with that broad knowledge that leaves no doubt unexplained, with the painstaking exactness that shows years of study. These questions were continued at the "Parlor Talks," given in the afternoon of three days. No one was ever sent away unsatisfied. Friday's lecture was on "Man and Woman, the Masters of their Own Destinies." Saturday: "A Conscious Universe and the Evolution of Man;" Sunday, "Devotion in Daily Life, or the true Meaning and Power of Prayer," Monday: "The Dangers of Hypnotism." During the presence of Countess Wachtmeister a branch of the Theosophical Society has been formed in Sheridan, for the purpose of affording all, who are interested, an opportunity of studying the tenets of Theosophy. The branch starts with 30 chartered members, and expects to begin the work from the beginning. Mr. F. Herbst has been elected President. All the arrangements for the lectures were made by our townsman, the Hon. H. A. Coffeen. He has taken all the trouble and all the risk; but we are getting so accustomed to owe him thanks for intellectual treats that, perhaps, we often forget to render them where they are due.

. H.

FARGO, N. DAKOTA.—The Countess Wachtmeister's visit was a pleasant and successful one. She met with a most cordial welcome. The Unitarian clergyman, Mr. Bellew, very generously gave the use of his church for the lectures and a parlor meeting. The Countess gave two lectures. A fund was raised on the spot for the purchase of a lending library. Two members were added to the roll of the American Section of the T. S., affiliating for the present with the Ishwara Branch of Minneapolis. A study class was formed, which will meet weekly in the Unitarian church. Probably by spring a Lodge will be formed in Fargo. A pleasant incident coming at the conclusion of the second lecture was a public expression of gratitude from a Baptist clergyman to the Countess for the helpful presentation of the truths she had given, and the expressed wish that he himself and his people might profit by them. The Countess has now gone to Minneapolis, where she is the guest of Mrs. K. B. Davis, 1316 Cinton Ave.

HONOLULU, HAWAIIAN ISLANDS.—The Aloha Lodge continues to meet regularly, the Secretary, Mr. G. W. Smith, giving informal talks in the absence of the President, Mr. A. Marques, whose return is anxiously awaited for a strong revival of the work. We hope that Mrs. Besant

will eventually stay here on her return to India, and her presence would be of great help. Dr. Peebles, a Theosophist of many years standing in San Diego, and a personal friend of Col. Olcott, has been here on his journey to Sydney, but he did not have time to lecture.

SCANDINAVIA.—The general Secretary of the Scandinavian section, Mr. Zettersten, writes a very encouraging letter. The section has settled down to active work, and new members are coming in. In Finland Theosophy is making great progress. The members in Helsingfors have got new headquarters and a library.

NEW ZEALAND.—The General Secretary Miss Edger, has been on a lecturing tour in the southern island in quite a number of towns. In Christchurch she lectured in "Our Fathers' Church," one of the independent churches of the city, arousing a great deal of interest. Christchurch is characterized by a general tolerance and breadth of thought in religious matters. Her lectures in Dunedin were very successful, drawing large and appreciative audiences. Press comments in all these different towns are quite favorable, and fair reports of all the lectures are given. The work in the different branches is progressing, and there seems to be a fair prospect of new branches being formed in the South.

THE CONVENTION OF THE INDIAN SECTION T. S., was held at Benares, on the 21-23d September. The headquarters of the Indian Section had been removed last year from Adyar to Benares, and it was the first time that the Convention met at the latter place. About 60 members from various parts of India were present; Mrs. Besant and Mr. B. Keightley, the Gen. Sec., from Europe. One of the chief features of the convention was the forming of a committee to supply relief to the famine-stricken people. A subscription of 2,300 rupees was raised on the spot, and it was resolved that each branch should actively partake in the work of relief. Mrs. Besant gave a course of lectures on Karma, Gyan and Bhaktimarga, and Mr. Keightley delivered an address on the Mission of the T. S. in India. On the whole the convention was most successful and harmonious.

We have received a notice from the Psychological Research Society of California in San Francisco, giving an outline of their work, consisting of lectures and experiments. The object of this Society is one which ought to be of interest to every student of Theosophy, especially to those who are investigating the third object of our Society, the latent powers in man. On the other hand, the student of psychical research will readily

perceive the advantage of a study on Theosophic lines, especially of those teachings that have come to us from the Orient, where the occult forces of nature have been the subject of careful study and investigation for milleniums, and where also many hints can be gathered as to the precautions which every student of "Yoga" ought to observe, in order not to expose himself to all the dangers which result from injudicious experiments with the psychical forces of the individual. Further information may be obtained from the Secretary, Mr. Maurice V. Samuels, Parrott Building, San Francisco, Cal.

NOTICE.

The managing Editor of MERCURY respectfully requests that until further notice all correspondence and orders relative to the magazine and books be addressed to Count Axel Wachtmeister, 414 Mason Street, San Francisco, Cal.

BOOK REVIEWS.

THE LUCIFER for September is rich in matter of vital import to the student. "Dreams" from the pen of a Hindu metaphysician explains these strange phenomena of consciousness in a clear and satisfactory way. "Musings of a Neophyte" offers a plea for the ordinary person which touches many of us very closely and merits frequent perusal. But the *one* article is that on "Thought Forms" with illustrations, written in Mrs. Besant's happiest style. We quote: "A thought form is a shape caused by the vibrations set up in the mental body by the activity of the Ego, clothed in the elemental essence of the mental plane, and possessing an independent life of its own with freedom of motion, its consciousness being limited to the thought of which its essence, or informing soul, consists. It may or may not have—but generally has—an additional coating of astral elemental essence." The illustrations are very useful object lessons. They depict the flower forms of true devotion, the golden star of wisdom, the rosy curve and crescent of love, the explosion of anger, the lurid flash of vengeance, the hazy clouds of indefinite thought; and we learn that "the quality of thought determines color, nature of thought determines form, and definiteness of thought determines clearness of outline." "Lives of Later Platonists" gives the biography of Sosipatra, a woman Initiate. "Mind in Nature," is by H. P. B. We learn from the Watchtower that a \$300,000 temple is to be erected at Chicago—a temple college for the teaching of "lost sciences."

LUCIFER for October.—“Psychology” is an unfinished article by H. P. B.; Mrs. Besant begins an article, “The Light and Dark Sides of Nature” Mr. Fullerton begins one on “The Power of an Endless Life.” “The Steps of the Path” is by C. W. Leadbeater. An exposition of “The Sankhya Philosophy,” by Bertram Keightley, commenced in the September number, is continued; it promises to be a great help to students who are puzzled over “Indriyas,” the “Tanmatras,” etc. Mrs. Hooper in “Occultism in English Poetry” reads into the individuality of the mystical poet, Blake, whose consciousness took in more worlds than the one we know. “Letters to a Catholic Priest” by Dr. A. A. Wells. An article like this one is the very thing for distribution. It explains clearly, without antagonizing, and makes orthodox error a stepping stone to the Wisdom Religion. “The Lives of the Later Platonists” treats of Maximus, who suffered imprisonment and torture for Truth’s sake.

LUCIFER for November.—No voice from the Watchtower this month. Three articles are concluded, *viz*: “The Light and Dark Sides of Nature,” “Occultism in English Poetry,” and “The Power of an Endless Life.” “Lives of Later Platonists” is continued. Mrs. Sinnett contributes a paper on “The Theosophy of Eckartshausen.” A very interesting paper is that of “Invisible Helpers” by C. W. Leadbeater. Mr. G. R. S. Mead discusses “The New Gnostic MS.”

THE THEOSOPHIST begins its XVIII volume with the October number. “Old Diary Leaves” continues the theme of mesmerism, and President Olcott relates the circumstance (a failure to cure permanently,) which gave him the key to the mystery of mesmeric cure. He says: “The vital aura must be accompanied with compassion or true sympathy to make a cure enduring.” “Modern Idealism worse than Materialism” is from a MS. left by H. P. Blavatsky. “The Photography of Light and Thought” by Dr. H. Baraduc and Bertram Keightley is an article all too brief; in it, the great French experimenter shows that his photographs prove beyond dispute that our thought has power to project images and can impress them upon a sensitive plate “by the personal, invisible light of our vital soul.” It also gives tangible proof of the luminous lines seen in the air by some clairvoyants. Mr. Fullerton concludes “Theosophy in Practice.” “Corroborations of Theosophy,” by A. Marques of Honolulu, is replete with interest. “Cuttings and Comments” are, as usual, full of useful information.

WE WISH to recommend to our readers *Notes and Queries*, a monthly magazine devoted to mysticism, folk lore, art, science, etc. It also con-

tains bibliographic notices and scraps of useful information culled from various sources, mostly concerning occultism and advanced thought. The November issue gives a short account of all the occult and secret societies in the United States. December is very varied; contains an article on logic by J. Van Nostrand; gives a list of occult books printed between 1500-1699, etc. The magazine is edited by S. C. Gould, F. T. S. Address Manchester, N. H. (\$1 yearly).

LE LOTUS BLEU, October—A remarkable article by Dr. Pascal, entitled "Luciferianism," has been running through four numbers of the *Lotus* and is concluded in the present issue. In France the researches into the occult, semi-material forces of nature have been carried on with more scientific labor and accuracy than elsewhere, and much light has been thrown upon these subjects by the patient studies of such men as Rochaz d'Aiglun and Baraduc. We have learned that these forces constitute the basis of the physiology of man, and, perhaps, the most marvellous discovery of the century is that which illustrates the working of the human brain; how, through the imagination, certain forms, semi-intelligent, semi-material are projected, which in their turn are able to react on the brain in various ways. One of the most interesting phases of these researches is the light that is thrown on the working of a diseased imagination, explaining the loathsome practices of Black Magic; practices which have occurred in all ages, and still occur, as well in refined Paris as in the Tantric performances of Nepaul and the Woodoo rites of Africa. It is a subject which has to be handled with gloves, but which still has to be brought into daylight, for, as Dr. Pascal justly remarks, ignorance is the root of all evil. Instead of ignoring these practices altogether, as in the Protestant church, or ascribing them to the devil, as is done by the Roman Catholics, Dr. Pascal tries to demonstrate how much is reality and how much is fiction. There are different kinds of Luciferianism—which word, by the bye, is a misnomer, meaning the very opposite of diabolism—*Satanism*, the materialization of an evil entity into the astral of a medium, an occurrence terribly dangerous, and, happily, very rare; *Palladism*, the evocation of nature spirits or elementals; a performance not necessarily evil; it is a species of lower magic, with certain ceremonies, of which very little is known. An interesting account is given of the visions of Diana Vaughan, who was possessed by an artificial elemental, who declared himself to be her guardian angel and showed his devotion by saving her from a great peril, but, later on, proved his inferior nature by exhibiting traits of jealousy. Dr. Pascal shows us plainly the folly of these practices and the importance of keeping our imagination in rational channels.

Received—The *Brahmavadin*, October, with an interesting article on "Reason and Faith," and some sayings of Sri Ramakrishna Parahansa, whom Max Mueller calls a "Modern Mahatma." The *Vahan*, November, containing interesting information by Mr. Leadbeater, "How to destroy an Astro mental image of evil character" and a formidable Lecture list of Theosophical Lodges in England. *Theosophy in Australasia*, October, with an article on "How to Improve Character;" *The Hindu Boys' Journal*, always bright and useful; *Rays of Light*, *Teosofisk Tidskrift*, *Dis Uebersinnliche Welt*, *The Theosophic Gleaner* and the *Journal of the Mahabodhi Society*.

In the *Nineteenth Century* for November is an article by Annie Besant entitled "The Conditions of Life after Death." Within a short space, a very clear outline is given of the different states of consciousness which, according to Theosophical tenets, the human Ego has to pass through after the dissolution of his body. These statements are not put forward as mere theories, but as the result of investigations by some students who have developed their faculties of inner perception. These faculties can be acquired by anyone who has sufficient endurance to pass through the necessary training. Appearing in one of the leading English magazines, this article will reach and bring suggestive thoughts to many who are trying to unveil the mystery which enshrouds the death of every human being.

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER.

[This Department will be devoted exclusively to children; questions and answers from Lotus Circles on Theosophical Subjects are invited and will receive special attention.]

THE FAIRY NECKLACE.

A VERY happy New Year to you, my dear readers. May it be a year of golden opportunity, and may the fairies be your friends. Ah! but perhaps, you do not believe in fairies. Fairies are a trifle old-fashioned, and we, that is you and I, are apt to have a weakness for the modern. Then too, our young folks are so learned that they look down upon fairies as unworthy of a student of "ics" and "ologies." But this is a mistake, as I will prove to you in a "true" story. You all love stories, don't you, in spite of your cubes and roots? The story is of a fairy quite up to the times, an X ray fairy, whose city home was—excuse me, I mean is a quaint necklace of Chinese workmanship.

One Christmas, not so very long ago, there lived in a cottage, perched eyre-fashion on the side of one of the sand cliffs of San Francisco, a young girl named Esbeth, who firmly believed in

fairies; yes, and in gnomes, elves, sprites peris, all the creatures of whatever name that roam over earth, in the skies or through the blue ethers, and more—this queer thirteen-year old girl felt that there was a life to live and cherish even in a stone. To her the flower, children of the hill-side and plain, were dear friends; and when she gathered them it was with love and tenderness; so in return the flowers loved her and bloomed their sweetest for her. And animals had no friend more staunch, more true than Esbeth. Many a forlorn dog, many a wretched cat had she rescued from the cruel boys who lived in her neighborhood. These boys, rough as they were, became gentle with Esbeth; even Tim Noolan, the worst hoodlum of the boy crowd, felt the power that shone out of the girl's eyes when she said "Tim, you shall not hurt that poor animal."

It was not that the boys were afraid of Esbeth, for there was nothing in her to fear; it was rather that she knew how to touch the good hidden in their souls. This trait of Esbeth brings me to my story, which you think, very likely, is a long time coming.

Very near to Esbeth's home was a Chinese laundry, owned by one Ah-Top, a nice, fat, kind-hearted Celestial who loved children and cats. Especially did he dote in forlorn homeless kittens, and the more wretched the looks of puss, the greater the hold she had on his affections. His pet, at the time of my story was a small kitten of a sad grey hue, a very frail midget and all eyes and tail. One day puss foolishly left her home and strayed almost to the top of the hill. Alas for her! Tim Noolan and his band pounced upon Puss and prepared to offer her up a tortured victim to their hate of the Chinese. They marched past the laundry holding aloft their victim which they pinched and pulled so that its cries would be heard by Ah Top. The poor fellow rushed out to the rescue.

"Geev me klittee, bad boys, I makee you go court—geev me my klittee"—and Ah Top shook his fist and made a vain rush for the kitten. The boys howled with delight and for answer tortured the helpless creature all the more. Then, suddenly there was a shimmer of golden hair, and Esbeth, with eyes aflame and hands outstretched, rushed into the crowd.

"Boys, give me that kitten! Don't you hurt it again, Tim Noolan! I'm ashamed of you. I'll never"—

What she was never going to do I can not tell you, for that instant she had the kitten in her arms soothing its terror and the boys were slinking away really ashamed of their cruelty.

"I tankee you, littee missee; you savee my klittee."

"Oh! I'm so glad I was near and heard it cry. Take care of it, Ah Top. Don't let it out. I'm not always by."

"You good girlee; I likee you; I lmember you, catch-much-a-day."

Esbeth ran off, laughing at Ah Top's queer name for Christmas, and very happy that she had saved the kitten.

But you say, "Where's the fairy?"

Well, be patient; the fairy is coming. It takes a real fairy some time, now-a-days, to get ready for a trip citywards. They have to take nerve tonics and wrap themselves in noise-proof cloaks so as not to be made ill by our rushing cars and shrieking engines."

Christmas eve, Esbeth heard a knock at the door. Running to it she found a package addressed: "To good Essie from Ah Top and klittee." The package consisted of a large round box in red and gold, which contained another box and that one still another; but on opening this last one she found a long string of curious and strangely wrought beads. There was also a tiny scroll of rice paper on which was written: "I's bling you good." All was fragrant with a rare and delicate perfume.

"Perhaps, it is a fairy necklace" thought Esbeth as she put it on. "I will sleep in it and who knows?" So Essie went to sleep with the strange necklace round her neck.

* * * * *

"How light it is! and what a short night!" cried Essie as she opened her eyes.

"Oh! what a lovely lady!"

For there, standing very near her, was a beautiful lady, clad in robes of blue sheen and yellow light, broidered with roses that filled the place with fragrance.

"Come, Esbeth," said the lady.

"Yes'm; I am coming, but please, are you a fairy?"

The lady smiled as she enveloped Esbeth in a fleecy cloak that looked like a bit of sky at sunset, and away they went, through meadows of feathery grass, of golden poppies, baby-blue-eyes and Iris; through groves of sweet scented Azalia and Magnolia; but the wonder of all was that the flowers were now children and people with eyes that looked at one, and lips that smiled, and voices that laughed and chatted just like live folks. Then the groves changed—became transparent as crystal so that the eye could barely perceive it; but the greatest wonder was its spray. I forgot to tell you that the fountain threw its waters to a great height and as they fell, the spray drops changed, some into mirrors reflecting all kinds of scenes: others into winged sprites flying off in all directions: while at moments a whole mass of spray changed slowly into a misty form of youth or maiden. As Esbeth gazed, one of these maiden forms glided away, and from the look of gentle earnestness in its eyes Esbeth knew that its errand was both great and good. "How I wish father and mother could see this," thought Esbeth. Immediately, she saw reflected in one of the mirror-disks her sleeping parents who were dreaming of happy days so that they smiled for joy. Then Esbeth thought of Ah Top, when lo! he appeared, a glad look on his face and Esbeth saw him murmur, "It will bring her good, it will bring her good."

The child, delighted at the wonders, turned to the fairy exclaiming, "I do wish every one will be as happy this Christmas as I am now."

The thought had scarcely taken form when a myriad sprites flew out from the fountain and winged their flight city-wards.

"See Esbeth, where your wishes are going," said the fairy.

"Can they make people happier?"

"They will try," answered the fairy, as a shadow of sadness dimmed the brightness of her face, and Esbeth thought she heard a sigh.

"What is this fountain?"

"It is known in fairy-land as the Wish Thought Fountain."

"And those mirrors?"

"They show your thoughts."

“And the sprites?”

“They are your wishes, dear.”

“And the maidens and youths?”

“Ah! they are thoughts, also, but great, good and strong thoughts.”

“Do they live?”

“Certainly, am I not alive?”

Esbeth wanted to ask, “Were you once only a thought?” but she did not like to be inquisitive; so she turned to the fountain, her mind one big question.

But fairies see thoughts quicker than we hear words, and Esbeth was startled to find her unspoken questions answered. “Ah little earth-child, so you think I could not have been a thought once on a time. Were you not once a wee, wee baby? Just as you have grown by eating and breathing, so have I.” “But,”—here Esbeth stopped for lack of words to speak her wonder. The fairy laughed merrily. “So you think I live on nothing? Well, some day you shall know, but we can’t learn everything at once, not even in fairy-land. Wait till you come to the fairies’ school and college.”

“Oh! can’t I go now; I do want to learn,” cried Esbeth.

Not this time, for you must go home now. Every one who comes to fairy-land can have one wish. What shall it be my dear little earth child?

“Oh! I want Father to have his wish.”

“He shall have it, dear,” said the fairy, kissing Esbeth good bye.

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Esbeth was so happy that Christmas Day that she could not do enough for her mother and father. She ran down to Ah Top and answered his “Melly Christmas” with, “It has brought me good” and her happiness had a to-morrow, for was she not going to visit the fairies’ school? But that adventure as well as the good which befell Esbeth’s father and herself I must reserve until some time in the future, for MERCURY says, “Too many words,” so good bye, and may you some day see the Wish Thought Fountain.

AUNT MAY.

HOW A MOTHER TAUGHT HER DAUGHTER.

[Translated from the French in Dr. N. L. Holbrook's "Advantages of Chastity."]

I analyzed a flower. I pointed out to her the beauty of coloring, the gracefulness of shape, the tender shade, the difference between the parts composing the flowers.

Gradually I told her what these parts were called. I showed her the pollen, which clung like a beautiful golden powder to her little rosy fingers; I showed her, through the microscope, that this beautiful powder, was composed of an infinite number of small grains. I made her examine the pistil more closely, and showed her, at the end of the tube, the ovary, which I called a "little house full of very tiny children." I showed her the pollen glued to the pistil, and I told her that when the pollen of one flower, carried away by the wind or by the insects, fell on the pistil of another flower, the small grains died, and a tiny drop of moisture passed through the tube and entered into the little house where the tiny children dwelt; that these tiny children were like small eggs; that in each small egg there was an almost invisible opening, through which a little of the small drop passed; that when this drop of pollen mixed with some other wonderful power in the ovary, they both joined together to give life, and the eggs developed and became grains of fruit.

I have shown her flowers that had only a pistil and others which had only stamens. I said to her, smiling, that the pistils were like little mothers and the stamens like little fathers of the fruit Thus I sowed in this innocent heart and searching mind the seeds of that delicate science, which degenerates into obscenity, if the mother, through false shame, leaves the instruction of her child to its schoolfellows. Let my little girl ask me, if she likes, the much dreaded question; I will only have to remind her of the botany lessons, simply adding, "The same thing happens to human beings, with this difference, that what is done unconsciously by the plants is done consciously by us; and that in a properly arranged society one only unites oneself to the person one loves."

Simplicity and holy innocence,—

When will ye learn your hallow'd worth to know!

Goethes' "Faust".

(Innocence—knowledge of good.)